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ABSTRACT

This article, prepared for college majors in foreign languages, offers occupational guidelines and suggestions for further occupational research. An occupational summary, a list of representative job titles related to the language major, representative employers of language majors, and a list of addresses are presented. A listing of foundations and research organizations is included. The study concludes with a reference bibliography on career opportunities. (RL)

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MAJOR IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND RELATED AREAS

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Occupational Summary

The study of a foreign language along with the development of related skills is basic to a great variety of careers. In today's world of rapid communications, a thorough knowledge in this discipline is becoming increasingly important. In general, careers for majors in this field are to be found mainly in three areas: Education, Business, and Government. However, of paramount concern to the student should be the consideration that the knowledge of a foreign language as acquired at the high-school or college level may not in itself be sufficient qualification for a job, but coupled with another skill, it can be an invaluable key to a very rewarding career.

Other programs that may relate to the study of a foreign language are: Foreign Language Education, International Studies, International Journalism, International Business, and TESOL (Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages). A combination of studies in any of these areas along with a foreign language can very well lead to a desirable career.

Representative Job Titles Related to Major

Teacher, Elementary School (FLES)
Teacher, High School
Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
Teacher in U.S. Government Schools
Teacher, Junior College[1]
Teacher/Researcher, University[2]
Precis Writer
Translator (free-lance)[3]
Interpreter
Peace Corps Member
Federal Government Employee
Travel Agent
Airline Stewardess
Bilingual Secretary
Immigration Patrol Inspector
Foreign Correspondent
Radio Announcer (Voice of America)

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[1]Teaching at the junior-college level usually requires at least a master's degree in the particular discipline to be taught.

[2]Teaching at this level normally requires a Ph.D.

[3]There is no particular license or degree required for this work. However, an extensive background plus years of experience are usually key factors in the making of a recognized translator.

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Translator, (U.S. Government or U.N.)[4]
Foreign Service Officer[5]
Representative in the field of International Business[6]
International Public Relations Specialist
Technical Assistance Specialist with the U.S. Government or U.N.
Foreign Language Textbook Publisher or Editor[7]

Representative Employers of Foreign Language Majors

U.S. Information Agency
Public School Systems
Junior Colleges
Immigration Service
Various Colleges and Universities
Department of the Army, Navy, Air Force
International Banking, Marketing, and Import/Export
Pan American Airlines
Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company
UNESCO
United Nations
Department of Defense
Peace Corps
Voice of America
U.S. Department of State
National Security Agency
Pan American Union, Division of Education
Inter-American Schools Service
Agency for International Development

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[4]For a position as a translator with the U. S. Government it is advisable to check Civil Service announcements with this job title. In most cases such positions call for the knowledge of the less commonly known languages such as Chinese, Serbo-Croatian, Thai,Hindi, etc. The serious study of one of the more commonly known languages (for example, French, Spanish, or German) is excellent early preparation for the later study of a more exotic language.

[5]For most positions with the U.S. Department of State as well as with other government agencies (e.g. USIA, NSA) it is necessary to qualify for consideration for employment by passing the FSEE (Federal Service Entrance Examination) which is open to graduate students, seniors,and juniors,with written tests usually scheduled every few months. Those who pass are considered for a variety of jobs, not just for positions in their special fields of study. Positions of interest to international relations people are in such fields as general administration, economics, communications, and investigation.

[6]This normally requires training in the business area. If not a major in International Business or a program at a special school, then at least some representative courses in this field (e.g. accounting, marketing, business administration) are advisable. In addition, many firms want on-the-job experience in their own companies.

[7]One does not usually step into such a position immediately after graduation. Most often years of experience in teaching and some training in applied linguistics as well as some knowledge of the publishing business would contribute to qualifying a person for a position of this kind.

Where to Seek More Information

State Employment Services

U. S. Civil Service Commission
1900 E Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20415

For information on teaching opportunities in Latin America for U.S. Citizens refer to:

The Division of Education
Pan American Union
Washington, D.C. 20006

Inter-American Schools Service
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Institute of Inter-American Affairs
Washington, D.C.

For information on teaching abroad (U.S. Government programs) refer to:

Elementary and Secondary Teaching
Teacher Exchange Section
U.S. Office of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202

Department of State Educational
Exchange Program
(Fulbright-Hays Act)
University Lecturing Associated
Research Councils
Washington, D.C. 20520

For information on teaching in elementary and secondary schools for Army, Navy, or Air Force personnel dependents refer to:

International Division
Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel
Department of the Army
Washington, D. C. 20310

Bureau of Navy Personnel
Department of the Navy
Washington, D.C. 20350

Dependents' Schools Section
Personnel Services Division
Department of the Air Force
Washington, D.C. 20330

For information on teaching in U.S. company schools for children of staff members teachers should write directly to the U.S. office of the firm:

Arabian American Oil Company
505 Park Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10022

Creole Petroleum Corporation
1230 Sixth Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10019

For application forms and information on U.N. interpreting and translating refer to:

Examinations and Training Section
Office of Personnel
United Nations
New York, N. Y. 10017

For information on teaching positions in Binational Centers abroad write to:

Binational Recruitment Officer
U.S. Information Agency
1776 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20547

The United Nations also has some openings for teacher-administrators. Inquiries should be directed to:

UNESCO
Room 2201
United Nations
New York, N.Y. 10017

Foundations and Research Organizations

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
United Nations Plaza at 46th Street
New York, New York 10017

Governmental Affairs Institute
1726 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20006

Managing Director
The Middle East Institute
1761 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20006

Director
Office of International Relations
National Academy of Sciences
(National Research Council)
2101 Constitution Avenue
Washington, D.C.

Personnel Administration Manager
The Ford Foundation
477 Madison Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10022

Comptroller
Council on Foreign Relations, Inc.
58 East 68th Street
New York, New York 10021

Director
Institute of Current World Affairs
522 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10036

Information on Government jobs can also be obtained from the following:

National Security Agency
College Relations Branch
Fort George G. Meade
Maryland 20755

(for information regarding NSA Professional Qualification test and other information regarding NSA).

Central Intelligency Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

U. S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

(for "A Career in the Foreign Service of the United States", price: $.50 from: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402).

Peace Corps
Washington, D.C. 20525

United States Information Agency
Washington, D.C. 20547

(for information on Foreign Affairs intern Program).

Addendum (January 1971):

From a survey of U.S. firms that do business abroad which was made recently, it was found that the types of training or experience that were most often cited as being useful adjuncts to language training were in descending order:
International Business Administration
Engineering
Finance
Marketing
Previous residence in the foreign country
Statistics and Computer Science
Advertising
Area Studies
Political Science
Civil Engineering
Law

Most of the companies contacted were sales or engineering firms. Of course, they tended to reply with reference to their particular specialty. A few firms indicated that they had no use whatsoever for foreign-language training among their employees, because their agencies abroad hire only nationals of the foreign country. A few others expressed the desire to recruit from among liberal arts majors who might have had some business courses, because they felt that people who had very specialized educational backgrounds were"untrainable". However, the vast majority of the companies contacted readily recognized the value of language-training coupled with some specialized education in an appropriate area such as those mentioned above.

Excerpts from a special circular by the U.N., "Information to Persons Interested in Examinations and Training for Interpreters".

The United Nations is always on the lookout for promising candidates for posts on its interpreting staff. These may be trained interpreters, capable of passing the qualifying examination immediately, or they may be persons of suitable linguistic and general cultural background who can be trained up to the required standard in a few weeks or months.

A United Nations' interpreter must have a thorough knowledge of at least three of the Organization's five official languages (English, French, Spanish, Russian, and Chinese). He must speak one of the three clearly and fluently, and have full auditory comprehension of the other two. This linguistic knowledge must cover a wide variety of fields: political, economic, legal, literary, and so on. Mere ability to converse socially in several languages is not enough.

Besides linguistic knowledge and skill, a United Nations' interpreter must be a person so equipped by education and experience (a university degree is usually required) that he has a thorough understanding of the various subjects debated...

A candidate who appears to have the qualifications mentioned in paragraphs 2 and 3 above, and who has had interpreting experience, may present himself for the qualifying examination, which consists in the performance of a series of simultaneous interpretations, into one language, of moderately difficult speeches delivered in two other languages. If the candidate passes this examination, and if he is a beginner, he may be offered a probationary appointment. After satisfactory service during the probationary period, normally of two years, he may be considered for permanent appointment and for promotion. If the candidate is already an interpreter of several years' standing, he may be offered an initial appointment... Senior interpreters of outstanding ability have an opportunity for promotion...

A candidate...who has no interpreting experience may apply for admission to a training course, lasting a few weeks or a few months, according to the candidate's ability. If the candidate is particularly promising, and has a language combination of which the Organization is in urgent need, he may be offered an appointment for part or all of his training period. At the end of the course, he may present himself for the qualifying examination and be offered, if he passes, an appointment.

For application forms and further information write to Examinations and Training Section, Office of Personnel, United Nations, New York, N. Y. 10017

REFERENCE BIBLIOGRAPHY ON CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR MAJORS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND RELATED AREAS

Careers in Languages: The Bilingual Secretary, Latin American Institute, 292 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017

Careers in Government, by Mary B. Sullivan, Henry Z. Walck, Incorporated, N.Y., N.Y.

Careers in World Affairs, Foreign Policy Association Inc., 345 East 46th Street, New York, N. Y. 10017

Careers With Foreign Languages, by Angelo Cohn, Henry Z. Walck, Inc., New York, N.Y.

Choosing a Language, U.S. Military Academy, West Point. Department of Foreign Languages. 10996

Directory of American Firms Operating in Foreign Countries, by Juvenal L. Angel, World Trade Academy Press.

Employment Opportunities in Binational Centers Abroad, U.S. Information Agency.

Federal Career Directory, A Guide for College Students, U.S. Civil Service Commission.

Federal Job Opportunities Throughout the United States, AN2280, U.S. Civil Service Commission, Washington, D.C.

Federal Jobs Overseas, Pamphlet No. 29, Dec. 1962, U.S. Government Printing Office

"Foreign Languages and Your Career", Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Service, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C. 20210

Futures in the Federal Government, U.S. Civil Service Commission, Washington, D.C. 20415

Guide to Employment Abroad, International Publications, P.O. Box 79, East Islip New York, N. Y. 11730

Handbook of Foreign Language Occupations, by June L. Sherif, Regents Publishing Company, Inc. 200 Park Avenue South, New York, N. Y. 10003.

How to Get A. Job Overseas, by Curtis Casewit, Arco Publishing Co., Inc., 219 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10003.

How to Get the Job You Want Overseas, by Arthur Liebers, Pilot Industries, Inc. 347 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10016

Job Descriptions, Office of Personnel, UN Headquarters, New York, N.Y. 10017

Looking For Employment in Foreign Countries, 5th edition, by Juvenal L. Angel, New York: World Trade Academy Press, 1961

Occupational Opportunities for Students Majoring in Spanish and Portuguese (Bulletin 1958, No. 1), Pan American Union, 17th St. and Constitution Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20006

Peace Corps General Information Kit, Office of Public Affairs, Peace Corps, 806 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20525.

Resurvey of Foreign Language Needs of Selected Federal Agencies, J.F. Wellemeyer and Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, J. F. Wellemeyer, 2101 R Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20008, 1961.

Teaching Opportunities Overseas, Hill International, P.O. Box 79, East Islip, New York N.Y. 11730.

The Overseas American, Cleveland, Harlan; Margone, Gerard, J.; and Adams, John Clarks; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.

Opportunities in Foreign Service, by Lucille Harrigan, Vocational Guidance Manuals, 800 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

A Handbook for Guiding Students in Modern Foreign Languages, Office of Education Bulletin, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

Career Opportunities as a Foreign Service Officer, U. S. Government Printing Office, 20 cents.

Career Opportunities for Young People in the USIA Foreign Service, U.S. Government Printing Office: 1962, Washington, D.C.

Employment Information, Department of State Publication 7130, Department and Foreign Service Series 98, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

The Foreign Service of the United States, Department of State Publication 7279, Department and Foreign Service Series 103, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

The U.S. Foreign Service: A Career for Young Americans, Department of State Publication 4559, Supt. of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

The United States Information Agency's Voice of America, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

Translating Foreign Languages into Careers, Indiana Language Program Director, Lindley Hall, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47401.

United States Information Agency, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962, Washington, D.C.